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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Central Hills packs 'em in for summer

By Micki Bennett
Correspondent

Central Hills Retreat, Mississippi Baptists' 540-acre Royal Ambassadors (RA) encampment near Kosciusko, is "bursting at the seams" this summer, said Manager Jim Ray.

The Retreat celebrated a 60% increase in attendance among its conferences. Operated by the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), the year-round facility is projected to host over 8,000 people this year.

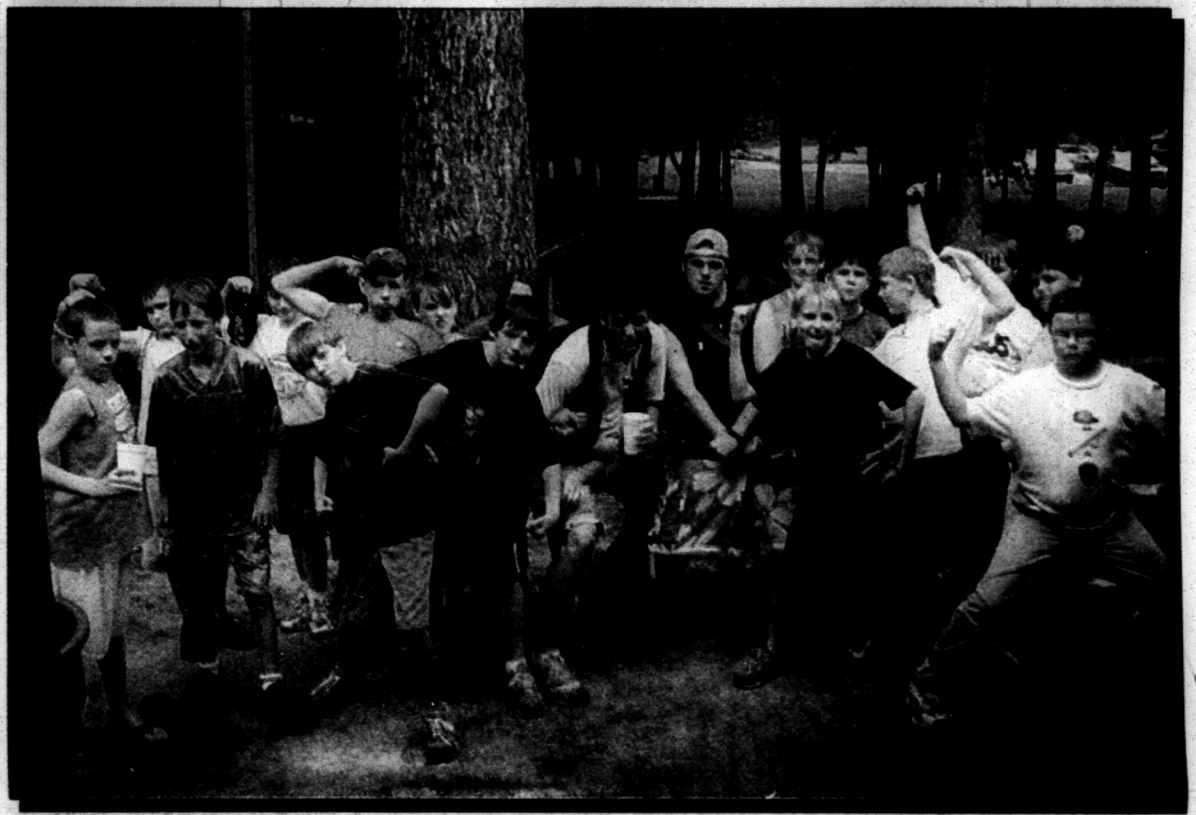
Out of the summer's diverse groups and conferences at Central Hills, a total of 308 recorded decisions were made for Christ — including 180 first-time professions of faith. Other decisions were rededications and life commitments in ministry or missions.

The Summer Missions Camp for Boys (RA camp) composes a full five weeks of the summer's agenda at Central Hills, but the Retreat center is actually host to a variety of venues. This summer, the encampment hosted a week for individuals with special needs as well as another week just for burn victims.

Central Hills also provided the perfect place for this year's Bible Drill Camp, Hispanic Evangelism Conference, two Lad/Dad Weekends, and two co-ed children's camps, which hailed a 300% increase this year compared to the children's camp's first year in 2003.

The site also hosted several sports camps over the summer where "two-a-days" meant not two football practice scrimmages each day but Bible study in the morning and worship at night.

An innovator of sorts, Ray — known as "J.R." to his staffers and friends — always looks for ways to expand ministry at Central Hills. This summer, he started a



JUST FOOLING AROUND — Attendees of the July 25-29 week of Royal Ambassadors camp at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko mug for the photographer during a free time at the Mississippi Baptist encampment. A total of 308 decisions were made for Christ at Central Hills during the summer, including 180 first-time professions of faith. (BR photo by Micki Bennett)

Christian summer program in the form of day camp for children grades one through six on Monday through Friday for \$60 per person per week. The children swam, canoed, hiked, played ball, did the ropes course, and had Bible study every day.

Ray, who is also currently president of the Mississippi Camping Association, served on staff at Central Hills for four summers during college while he majored in religion, business, and philosophy with a minor in recreation. He has worked a total of 12 summers in camp work, the past five being full-time manager of Central Hills.

No matter his expertise, Ray doesn't do it alone. He hires a summer staff of 30 college students each year whose jobs range from ropes course instructor to lawn mower to counselor. Five year-round employees, including Ministry Assistant Debbie Ramage, Assistant Manager/Maintenance Aaron Gantt, and a food service staff help to make Central Hills run smoothly for guests.

Ray contributed much of the summer's success to volunteers and those who give a portion of their time and money to state missions. "If we didn't have Margaret Lackey (State Missions Offering), we couldn't open the doors," said Ray. "It allowed those (180) kids to come to Jesus this summer, and has given these college students a chance to serve the Lord."

The Mississippi Baptist Campers on Mission organization and the MBCB Discipleship and Family Ministries Department encourage volunteers to come and help manage facilities during the RA camps. "Volunteers are the

lifeblood of Central Hills," said Ray. "We can depend on them to help paint, cut grass, and work in the kitchen."

Missions is the focus of Central Hills' RA camp program. Every week missionaries and a camp pastor shared with campers through Bible study and worship. One night during the week, campers participated in what they call "spontaneous worship" when the RAs themselves led the service and shared what God is doing in their hearts.

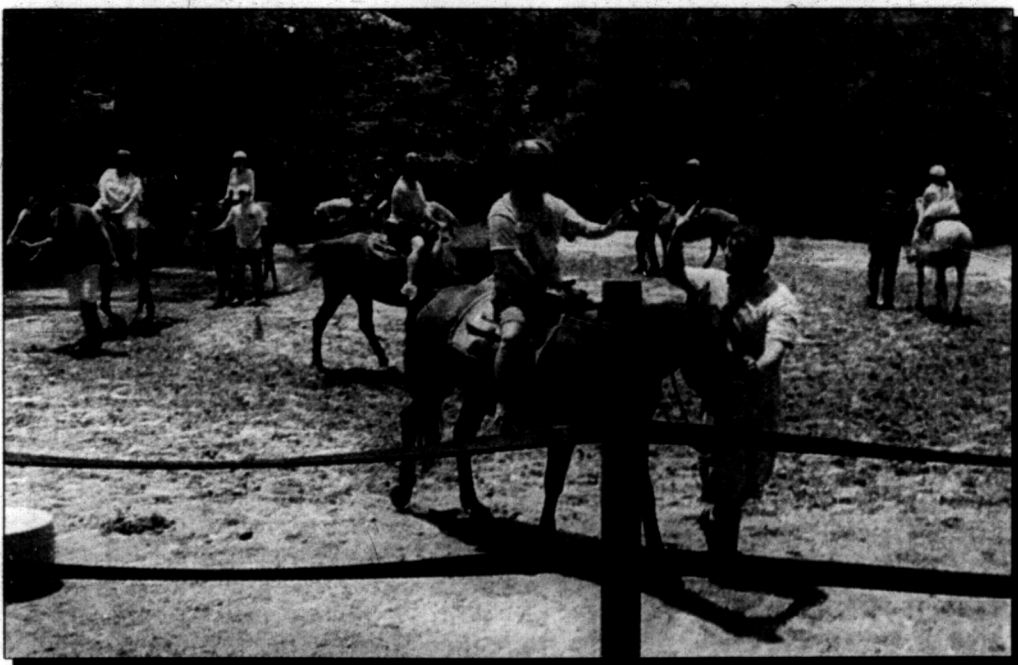
The theme verse this summer was Jeremiah 29:13: "And ye shall seek Me and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."

Louis Harrell, minister of evangelism and discipleship at First Church, Pontotoc, served as pastor for the final week of RA camp. "Besides teaching the boys how to identify poisonous snakes," Harrell said, "they learn how to act like a Christian, be kind, and struggle together."

They learn respect and responsibility, and that translates into respect for their camp counselors, parents, and essentially God, said Harrell, himself a former Central Hills staffer.

"Mississippi Baptists ought to be proud of the students that come out of their colleges," Ray said, speaking of his staff. These students "teach the kids to swim, teach them to ride horses, lead them in Bible study, and lead them to the Lord."

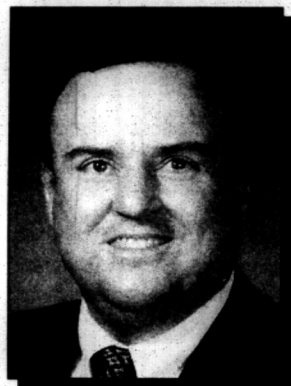
For more information on Central Hills Retreat, visit www.mbc.org and click on Camps/Assemblies, or contact Ray at P.O. Box 698, Kosciusko, MS 39090. Telephone: (662) 289-9730. E-mail: chbr@mbcb.org.



GIDDY UP — Central Hills Retreat staffers teach the fine points of horseback riding to participants in the first-ever camp for people with special needs, held earlier this summer at the facility near Kosciusko. Central Hills is managed by the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Readers of The Baptist Record were incredulous last year when this column described a new California state law that gives children as young as the first grade the right to choose their gender on school forms, regardless of anatomical reality. Dozens of subscribers called or wrote to request documentation, copies of which were provided. Many people still had trouble believing it even after reading the news reports and doing research on their own, but it's true nonetheless.

Well, there's another challenge to your intelligence on the horizon, this time from Massachusetts. It seems homosexual rights activists there are pressuring the state to move forward from the recent legalization of homosexual marriage in that state and change birth certificate references regarding "Father" and "Mother" to read, "Parent A" and "Parent B."

Homosexual activists are concerned that children adopted by homosexuals or produced by a stand-in mother with the assistance of one of the homosexual partners have been the victims all this time of birth certificate mislabeling. The same goes for lesbian

couples who choose to have a child through sperm donation. In these situations, who's to say which is the father and which is the mother? Right?

"There should be no doubt in Massachusetts that Massachusetts records should accurately reflect the true nature of Massachusetts families, and that includes same-sex married couples," Michele Granda, an attorney for Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, told FOX News as reported in an August 3 Baptist Press article by Michael Foust. (Baptist Press is the source of much of the information in this commentary.)

Just as we are

Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, a Republican, says he is very much against the birth certificate change, but has curiously advised hospitals to simply scratch out the "Father" and "Mother" headings on birth certificates and substitute "Second Parent." Aside from the legal ramifications of defacing a legal document, such as not being able to get a driver's license or passport in the future, the craven Romney should know there is no such thing as compromise with radical homosexual activists.

Compromise is not on their agenda. Nothing short of the complete restructuring of American society, from birth to death and everything in between, will satisfy them. Even innocent children and their birth certificates are not overlooked.

"Children, really, are more trophies in this cultural war than they are genuinely the result of two people in a loving relationship," observed Kris Mineau, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute. "In this sheer madness of homosexual marriage, these are the issues that we're facing. It's rendering confusion at all levels of society."

As the homosexual movement extends its tentacular grip on modern American culture, many Christians also seem to be smitten with the normalization of homosexuality. The Episcopal Church ordains practicing homosexuals, while Lutheran conservatives struggle to stem the homosexual rights tide in their denomination. Other so-called Christian groups broadcast national commercials encouraging homosexuals to come to their churches, "just as you are."

Actually, there is a place in the Christian life for homosexuals and other assorted sinners like you and me, just as we are — as reflected in the words of the grand old hymn, "Just as I am, without one plea, but

THE FIRST 'SELF-HELP' PROGRAM...

"ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY — LISTEN UP! HERE ARE TEN STEPS TO GET YOU INTO THE PROMISED LAND SAFELY. YOU'LL WANT TO WRITE THIS DOWN."



that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come."

Our chief responsibility as Christians is not to change the culture through political means, but to change the world through the Lamb of God. If we would only heed the words of the hymn and achieve the latter, we will surely accomplish the former.

Editor's note: A typographical error in last week's Editor's Notebook rendered a sentence that read in part, "...pray with ceasing..." when it should have read, "...pray without ceasing..." The author apologizes for the error.

Dan Brown's staggering bestseller, *The Da Vinci Code*, comes to the screen in May 2006. The downside: Many nonbelievers will take the fictitious story to be truth. The upside: Some will ask Christians questions. Are we ready for those questions?

Directed by Ron Howard (Apollo 13, Cinderella Man), the movie version starring Tom Hanks, Audrey Tautou, and Ian McKellen began filming June 30 in Paris and is set to wrap on Oct. 19 in England. The plot concerns a covert religious organization that will stop at nothing to protect a secret that threatens to overturn 2,000 years of accepted dogma.

The book and now the film claim that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, had a child in that union, and a clandestine society once headed by Leonardo Da Vinci has protected this information for centuries against a threatened Catholic hierarchy.

According to *Cracking Da Vinci's Code* by James L. Garlow and Peter Jones, many of the assertions about Jesus in the book come from a fictional character named Leigh Teabing.

"Leigh Teabing is an expert in the ancient trail leading to the Holy Grail," Garlow and Jones write. "A former British

GUEST OPINION:



Get ready now for The Da Vinci Code

By Phil Boatwright
Kansas City, Kansas

Royal Historian, Teabing moved to France to personally search through churches for clues leading to the Grail."

The *Da Vinci Code* narrative reads as if it were, well, gospel. At one point in the book, Teabing says, "[A]lmost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false."

So, is this film a threat to the Christian community? "The real threat of this heresy is not so much on the Christian community as it is on the lost world," Jim Melrose, pastor of Victory Church in Tonganoxie, Kan., said. "Those who reject the truth seek out a lie to cling to... Sadly, it will impact many carnal and immature Christians who are not grounded in their faith."

How can Christians prepare themselves for the onslaught of theological queries? In light of the *Da Vinci Code*, Christian

shepherds are warning the flock to know God's Word and to study the history of the Christian faith.

Billy Graham reported in his syndicated newspaper column, "I know of no reputable Bible scholar or historian (Christian or non-Christian) who would agree with its claims about Jesus or take it seriously. There simply is no historical evidence to support its alleged 'discoveries' about Jesus: nor is there any evidence at all that Christians have 'covered up' the truth about Jesus."

Graham added, "In the last days before Christ's return, according to Paul, people 'will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths'" (2 Timothy 4:4).

There are several books that deal with the specifics of Dan Brown's controversial book while pointing out factual

Christian heritage. Though this is not an endorsement of each of the following publications — as I have not read every one of them — they are available through most Christian bookstores. Ask your pastor for recommendations.

- *Cracking Da Vinci's Code: You've Read the Fiction, Now Read the Facts*, by James L. Garlow and Peter Jones.

- *Breaking The Da Vinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everyone is Asking*, by Darrell L. Bock.

- *De-Coding Da Vinci: The Facts Behind the Fiction of The Da Vinci Code*, by Amy Welborn.

- *The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing Errors in the Da Vinci Code*, by Carl E. Olson and Sandra Miesel.

- *The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code: A Challenging Response to the Bestselling Novel*, by Richard Abanes.

- *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code*, by Bart D. Ehrman.

Boatwright is a Christian entertainment critic. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. To read the first article in this series, go to www.moviereporter.com and click the column button. Books on *The Da Vinci Code* are available at www.LifewayStores.com by entering "Da Vinci Code" in the search function.

Famine hurting spiritually-starving Niger

MARADI, Niger (BP) — Famine is nothing new in the west African nation of Niger, or to Southern Baptist missionary Mike Loftice.

In recent months, drought and an invasion of locusts have made the situation even worse, threatening millions with starvation. Loftice, who has lived and worked in the hard-hit Maradi region of Niger since 1997, recently coordinated a \$75,000 relief project in six villages. The effort supplied more than 8,000 people with tons of millet and beans — and a second chance at life.

"There is no doubt that hundreds of lives were saved," Loftice reported. "In every village where we distributed food, literally hundreds of people from other villages came to us searching for food. We gave to as many as possible, but unfortunately our resources were not enough."

In a country with 11 million people, more than three million face starvation, according to recent estimates. More than 800,000 of the suffering are children; thousands of them are dying.

"Death is a huge part of everyday life in Niger," Loftice said. "Over 50 percent of all children die by the time they reach 5 years of age."

The Maradi region contains about 1,000 villages. Because of a lack of Southern Baptist personnel — Loftice and his family are the only International Mission Board (IMB) workers assigned to the area — just a few villages could receive relief.

More than 90% of the Hausa people who live in this area are subsistence farmers, Loftice said. They struggle to survive on an average of about seven inches of rain per year. Even in a "good year," the people grow only enough food — millet, beans, and peanuts — to sustain them for about six months.



HELPING HAND — Southern Baptist missionary Mike Loftice (left center) works with a group of farmers in the famine-stricken nation of Niger, West Africa. Loftice, who has lived and worked in the Maradi region of Niger since 1997, recently coordinated a \$75,000 relief project in six villages. The effort supplied more than 8,000 people with tons of millet and beans. (BP photo by Sue Sprengle)

Many have left their villages to seek aid, but others are too weak to move. Thousands of people sat outside the Loftice home for more than three weeks, hoping to receive a small handful of food.

"People are scared, desperate, and lack any sense of hope in their villages," he added. "My average-sized 13-year-old [son] is literally 100 pounds heavier and 1.5 to two feet taller than the same age Hausa child in our area. Many two-year-olds look like newborns."

Physical starvation may be part of life in famine-ravaged Maradi, but what the people truly hunger for is hope, Loftice said, because spiritual famine also stalks the land.

Most of the 3.6 million Hausa people who live in Niger embrace Islamic teachings and reject Christ. A handful of Christians who live in these villages deal not only with hunger but with daily rejection and isolation. Some shop owners refuse to give Christian villagers the same service they give Muslims.

"The Muslim people of this area need a Christian witness of love and compassion," Loftice said. "The greatest need of any people is to know Jesus as Lord and Savior."

Southern Baptists should be careful not to nurture a movement of "rice bowl" Christians, he added, but to express genuine concern for all the needs of Hausa people — physical and spiritual.

"Food is never enough," Loftice stressed. "Money is never enough. Resources are never enough. Only our all powerful and all-loving God can cure what ails Niger."

For more information or to contribute to hunger and relief efforts in Niger, contact the IMB World Hunger & Relief Ministries at (800) 999-3113, ext. 1736. Checks can be sent to the International Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va., 23230.

Siloam pool found?

JERUSALEM (BP) — What is believed to be the Pool of Siloam, where Jesus healed a man blind from birth in John 9, has been unearthed in Jerusalem, and a Southern Baptist archeologist is convinced the find is authentic. "I've seen it. It's a phenomenal, monumental pool," Steven Ortiz, associate professor of biblical archaeology and director of the Center for Archaeological Research at New Orleans Seminary, told Baptist Press. Ortiz made a trip to Israel in recent weeks and walked along the site with one of the field staff working on the excavation. According to an article in the September/October 2005 issue of Biblical Archaeology Review by editor Hershel Shanks, some workers were repairing a sewage line with heavy equipment last summer when they uncovered what appeared to be two steps. Archeologists believe at this time that the pool was at least 225 feet wide at one point, and steps were on at least three sides of the pool. The corners are greater than 90 degrees, indicating the pool was a trapezoid rather than a square, Shanks reported. Two important bits of information researchers always want to know about a historic site are the date of construction and the date when the facility stopped being used, Shanks wrote. In this case, archeologists have found both. They used a metal detector to discover four coins in the plaster containing the imprint of Alexander Jannaeus, a Jewish king who ruled Jerusalem from 103 to 76 B.C., thereby providing the earliest date the pool could have been constructed. Also, they found a dozen coins from the period of the First Jewish Revolt against Rome, which lasted from A.D. 66 to 70. So archeologists know the pool was used until the end of the revolt, when it was abandoned as mud slid in from the hillside and was no longer cleaned out of the pool. Workers found the pool, located in the lowest spot of Jerusalem, under nearly 10 feet of mud in some places, Shanks noted. This particular Pool of Siloam, used in Jesus' day, is different from one that tourists normally visit today, Ortiz said, which was built during the Byzantine era and assumed to be at the original site. "The traditional pool that everyone currently goes to visit is much smaller, and this newly excavated pool is at least five times as large," Ortiz said. Archeologists have not yet concluded whether this pool is located in the same place as the one mentioned in the Old Testament that existed in Hezekiah and Isaiah's time. They believe that if they can find Iron Age pottery from the sixth to 10th century B.C., then they will have confirmation that the pools share the same location. "This summer has been a phenomenal time for Jerusalem archeology," Ortiz said.

Looking back

10 years ago

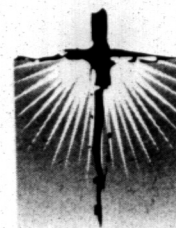
Men's Ministries is the new thrust of the Brotherhood Commission, complementing the work of highly successful groups like Promise Keepers. The program officially launches in October.

20 years ago

Priceville Church, Tupelo, burns to the ground after an apparent gas explosion injures four people just as Sunday School begins. A thunderstorm that kept people in their cars outside the church is credited with preventing more injuries.

50 years ago

First Church, Vicksburg votes to construct a new facility with a 1300-seat sanctuary, 200-seat chapel, and educational space for 1600. John McCall is pastor.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

Champ's Rally planned for Meridian area

Northcrest Church, Meridian, will host a Champion's Rally from 6-8 p.m. on August 19, sponsored by Bill Glass' Champions for Life, Lauderdale Association, and local business owners.

Tips on being a champion in life will be shared by professional athletes and life champions, including for Dallas Cowboy cheerleader Sonja Samuel and Shawn Harper, former lineman for the Indianapolis Colts. Live music will be presented by two live bands: Everyday Sunday, and GBoyz.

Event coordinator is Jim Harris, Northcrest Church prison ministry director and event coordinator for Bill Glass' Champions for Life. The dress for the event is casual attire. There is no cost for the event. All youth are invited.

For more information, contact Carolyn Switzer at Northcrest Church, (601) 482-3498. E-mail: carolyn@northcrestbaptist.com.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

It was 30 years ago that the movie Jaws brought such fear to Americans that even folks living in Kansas were scared to put their toe in the water for fear that the huge monster would lunge at them. The slow heartbeat sounds of the music of Jaws added to the terror that kids and grown folks alike felt.

In the summer of 2005, Jaws, not the movie, but in real life has returned. Three attacks have already taken place, one of them being fatal. Beyond that ole time fisherman and shark watchers say they have seen more sharks this year than ever. It was heart-breaking for all of us to hear of the 14 year-old girl who was about 100 yards out from the shore swimming on a boogie board with her friend when suddenly she was attacked. While the friend and a heroic man came to her rescue to help her to the beach and then to the hospital, it was to no avail. She had lost too much life and energy and too much blood to overcome the trauma. I suppose all of us felt the hurt and the horror of the loss. The following attacks though not fatal also ratcheted up our concern and feelings. It is amazing how conscious you can become and how fearful you can be even when you live hundreds of miles from the beach.

We are a people that quickly gravitate to our fears and our fears quickly consume us. After several shark attacks along the waters of the Florida Panhandle, people were worked up into a frenzy. The U.S. Annual Average of Animal-Related Fatalities during the 1990s helps you to put into perspective how unusual the shark attacks are and how we lose sight of other dangers around us. More people are killed each year by lightning, flooding, and even from choking while they are eating than die from shark attacks. I may be wrong but hearing that someone choked while eating a piece of steak or a big piece of broccoli rarely slows anybody down from coming to the table at the next opportunity.

Do you know how many people die in America each year from shark attacks? According to the International Shark Attack File the figure is .4%. That means that a person dies from a shark attack about every two and a half years in America. I am not saying this is insignificant, but let's compare this figure to the number of people killed by a deer each year. Would you venture to guess how many people in America die that way? Annually, 130 people die. Since we live in a state with a huge deer population, undoubtedly most of us are probably paralyzed with fear driving down a highway through a wooded area because we could be in jeopardy and put in a life or death situation from a deer attack. It is dangerous and while we may think about it, we probably do not sit at home paralyzed by fear even when we realize the danger.

Now the reason I mention all of this is to call you and me to a proper understanding of the fears in our lives and the best way we can deal with them. Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy and said, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." Yet, there are so many people who are moved and managed by their fears. They get up and face the day fearfully. They listen to their fears, play to their fears, and act and react in fear. They allow fears to become larger than life. They are stifled, stunned, and stymied by life's anxieties. How do you deal with that? How do you go on in fear? Let me offer three suggestions that might help with whatever fears you may be grappling.

Listen to the call of God who says repeatedly throughout Scripture, "Fear not. Fear thou not for I am with thee. Fear not."

Does that mean just push your fears aside and ignore them? Not at all! It means listen to God who cares about you so much that He will be with you in every circumstance, so that whatever you may face, whomever you may come up against, and whatever may attack you out of the dark waters of life, God knows. You can live in His strength. Sometimes it is not a matter of pushing your fears aside so much as it is allowing God to come on the scene. I have heard people say, "One plus God is a majority." The more I understand about the Lord the more I realize that is not altogether true. God is a majority, plus or minus anybody. When He comes on the scene of your life, you can trust Him and rest in the confidence that He will not forsake you, walk away from you, or abandon you. He will be there.

Look your fears squarely in the eye and see them for what they might be. Personally, I have never had a fear of flying though I know of people who do. There have been some times, places, weather situations, and mechanical difficulties that have come up while I have been flying that I wondered if maybe I should be afraid, but when you take that fear and put it into perspective, it has a different look about it.

I recently ran across these aviation statistics about why people should feel safe when flying in America. The stats said that there are more people killed on the roads and highways in America in vehicle accidents every four months than the combined total of all the people who have died in airplane crashes in the last 65 years. Is that not overwhelming? Yet I know of very few people who have a fear of getting in a car or

driving or riding somewhere. Well, to be honest I don't know anyone who is paralyzed by that fear. In the incidences of the sharks, I have never known someone personally who has been attacked by a shark much less killed by one. I know of very few people who have even seen a shark in the wild yet the fear permeated our nation overnight, while on the other hand I have known of scores of people, friends or family, who were injured and some who were killed by just driving from one destination to another. Look at your fears in stark reality.

Live and act sensibly, spiritually, and even joyfully in spite of your fears. Be who God wants you to be today. Go where He wants you to go. Do what He wants you to do and with thoughtfulness move forward knowing that whatever happens God can use, protect, and bless you. Those three young men who were about to be cast into the fiery furnace told the king that everything was going to be all right. If God wants us to walk through the fire, He is able to care for every one of our needs and bring us through. If God wants us to die in the fire, then that is all right also because we still belong to Him. Face today with an optimistic, positive, and triumphant spirit that knows that whatever you face, whatever may be on the horizon of life, or whatever may sneak up on you without you seeing or knowing the Lord God Almighty is in charge. Live for Him! Jesus said, "I have come to give life and to give it more abundantly." While that may encompass a hundred different things related to the needs in your life today, one is the fact that He is the God of glorious conquest. God is not controlled by fears, and He does not want His people to be shaped by anxieties and uncertainties but rather to be shaped by a life that is lived for Him. He is the Lord of life, and He is the Lord over all of the sharks of life.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

PLAYING GOD?

Editor:

In your June 23 column in The Baptist Record concerning Terri Schiavo, you failed to mention that her husband had worked earnestly for four years to help rehabilitate Terri. When the attending physician and other consulting physicians determined that she was brain dead and suggested removing the tube, could it not have been that they were acknowledging that God is sovereign and that medical science, for all its progress, is limited?

God, in His mercy and through His permissive will, has allowed medical science to come a long way in saving lives through emergency measures. However, are we trying to play God when we refuse to allow a loved one relief from a brain dead body? When we use artificial means to keep a body on the earth when all cognizance is gone, are we prolonging life or death? More importantly, are we usurping God's authority?

I do not believe in euthanasia nor in

destroying unborn children; I do believe that we need to be very careful how we use the blessings God has given us. It is my prayer that God will endow us with the wisdom to properly utilize the knowledge He has so bountifully given.

Frances Smith
Jackson

SICK AND TIRED

Editor:

In reference to Paul Hadinger's June 16 letter to the editor concerning "Rick Warren's books and the activities that are based upon them in thousands of churches," I am getting sick and tired of people who have nothing better to do than to run down those who are willing to do whatever it takes to reach out to the lost and bring them into the Kingdom of God.

Hadinger pointed to a couple of red flags that I have questions about. Red Flag

#1: The attention that "the controlled, anti-Christian major media" gives "to Warren and his movement." I wonder, do Hadinger and those who agree with him feel the same way about the highly respected Billy Graham? And what about Jesus? It's interesting that He was treated in much the same way by the religious leaders of His day. Red Flag #2: I don't know exactly what Ken Blanchard is doing at Saddleback, but I've never heard him referred to as a New Age guru/mystic.

It never fails. Anytime a person or a church begins to be used greatly of God, there are always plenty of pastors and other Christians to open fire. I would love to ask all those who criticize Warren and Saddleback, how many people did you lead to the Lord last year? How many baptisms did your church record last year?

Maybe if we all got busy serving the Lord, we wouldn't have time to sit around and criticize those who are.

Anthony Miller, pastor
Calvary Church, Yazoo City

(cont'd on page 5)

LITERAL BIBLE

Editor:

Eric Rudolph is no more violent than is the Bible from which he drew his inspiration. He literally became a Christian soldier in the war on evil. When we sing, Onward Christian Soldiers, we are singing Eric's song.

The Bible taken literally, as many Southern Baptists do, instructs us to kill people for any number of reasons. For example, the penalty for breaking most of the Ten Commandments is explicitly spelled out as death. See for yourself:

- Taking the Lord's name in vain, Leviticus 24:16.
- Working on the Sabbath, Exodus 31:15.
- Cursing one's father or mother, Exodus 21:17.
- Adultery, Leviticus 20:10.

We are also instructed to kill any foreign or homegrown missionaries of any faith other than Christianity, even if they are our children or relatives (Deuteronomy 13:6-11).

As we condemn Eric Rudolph for what he did, we should also consider our own hypocrisy for preaching that the Bible is literally true and then selectively omitting the verses we find troubling.

Least you say the Bible is completely accurate but only needs to be "interpreted," I direct you to Deuteronomy 13:1-5, which explains that the Scriptures are not to be interpreted rationally, but should be observed exactly as presented — just like Rudolph did.

Jim Clinton
Louisville

CORRECTIONS

Editor:

The June 30 editorial in The Baptist Record incorrectly reports on the education resolution that was presented by the Resolutions Committee to the Southern Baptist Convention. Bruce Shortt and Voddie Baucham did propose a new resolution but did not bring back the old one from last year. The new resolution was looked at and appreciated by the Resolutions Committee but it was not the one that was presented by the committee to the messengers. The presented resolution came from the Resolutions Committee itself. Contrary to the editorial, the quotes given were not in the Baucom and Shortt resolution. Instead, they originated with the Resolutions Committee.

There is also an error in an article entitled, Motions, resolutions considered at SBC, on page nine of the same Baptist Record. The article quotes Shortt as urging "Southern Baptists to 'investigate diligently... to determine if your school district is betraying your trust by teaching homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle.'" Contrary to the way the article reads, this was not an amendment but simply a statement by Shortt when he endorsed the resolution recommended by the Resolutions Committee.

The amendment came from another messenger and stated, "that we commend godly teachers and students who feel called by God to take a stand for Christ in secular schools as a light shining in the darkness." This was the amendment that the Resolutions Committee accepted as friendly and which was then approved and adopted.

I do appreciate your positive comments about what was truly a great annual meeting.

Ida South
Mathiston

Editor's note: South was a member of the 2005 Resolutions Committee that served at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Nashville earlier this summer.

LESSON LEARNED

Editor:

I am writing regarding the services of our Mississippi Baptist Youth Night on July 22 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. I hope this Youth Night will be a lesson learned for future committees who have the awesome responsibility of planning this night.

In the 13 years I have pastored, I have attended Youth Night most every year and was proud I did. To see the young people respond to God's call during the invitation has always given me chills down my spine, a lump in my throat, and a tear in my eye. To see the Holy Spirit of God take the Word of God and work in the lives of these young people is amazing. However, that was not the case this past Youth Night. There was very little movement during the invitation apart from the counselors positioning themselves. This lack of movement I believe was due to the lack of the Word of God being proclaimed.

To those of you who were not there, the night's services included music

(geared toward youth, and good), a skit through drama, more music, and then the second part of the drama followed by an invitation.

You cannot substitute the preaching of God's Word with a skit or drama and expect a movement of God without preaching His Word. As a Mississippi Baptist, I believe July 22 was a great opportunity lost!

Sean K. Tutor, pastor
Brewer Church
Shannon

FRUIT REMAINS

Editor:

We would like to thank Mississippi Baptists for their prayers and financial support during our recent trip to Southeast Asia. We would especially like to thank Ken Rhodes, Virginia Fairley, and Mitzi Curry (Missions Mobilization Dept. of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board) for all their encouragement and hard work that it took to get us there and back. We appreciate so much Beulah Church in Newton County sending us on this journey with so much love and support, and to all our friends and family across Mississippi we say thank you.

John 15:16 says, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give you." God chose us to go to Southeast Asia for five weeks and we obeyed the Lord's call to go. He said that He appointed us and that we were to bear fruit and that it would remain.

The Lord answered all our prayers and the trip was a great success. On our trip we planted, watered, and even saw some harvest. We believe that our work will continue to bear fruit and will remain. Mississippi Baptists made an investment in our lives and in the Kingdom work. We are proud to be Mississippi Baptists and are thankful for all the encouragement and resources that enable us to be Acts 1:8 Christians.

Leroy and Sharon Brewer
Brandon

MANY THANKS

Editor:

Many thanks are due Mississippi Baptists for helping with our expenses on the Vancouver Vision Journey. We had a very compatible group of 23. We bless God for the privilege of going. Pray for the Focus Team in Vancouver as well as for those who will be going there to minister. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada is a Focus City for next year in partnership with our North American Mission Board.

Truman D. Scarborough
Director of Missions
North Central Association
Grenada

VERY GRATEFUL

Editor:

Ruth and I are very grateful for the opportunity to be involved in missions. We want to thank Mississippi Baptists for their support and for making it possible for us to be on mission.

Without knowing where, how, or when, Ruth and I said "yes" to God's voice during a Missions Celebration in George-Greene Association.

God said where: Bismarck, N.D. God said how: through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Mission Mobilization Department. God said when: January 2005, two months after our commitment.

We left Lucedale in 75-degree weather and arrived in Bismarck in minus 30-degree weather. We were there for six months serving with the wonderful people of Capitol Heights Church in Kingdom work.

God did a great work amongst us. Please pray for Pastor Glenn, his wife Penny, and their six children. They do have a heartbeat for North Dakota.

Thank you, Mississippi Baptists, for your heartbeat for pioneer missions in the Dakotas.

Roger and Ruth Gilbert
Lucedale

MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, LAMBERT, MISS., is seeking a part-time minister of music. Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 145, Lambert, MS 38643 or contact church office at (662) 326-7772, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon, Monday-Friday. Call Don' O'Quinn after 6:00 p.m. at (662) 326-7336.

MINISTER OF YOUTH/CHILDREN: Dry Creek Baptist Church in Magee, Mississippi. Resumes being accepted for a bivocational minister of youth/children. Send resume to Dry Creek Baptist Church, 1246 Dry Creek Road, Mendenhall, MS 39114.

PART-TIME MUSIC ASSISTANT needed for the instrumental/orchestra ministry of a Pearl/Brandon area southern Baptist church. Call Ronnie at (601) 946-9406 for more information.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN ROLLING FORK, Miss., is currently seeking a director of youth. Please send resumes with

references to youth committee chairman, First Baptist Church, 73 North Second St., Rolling Fork, MS 39159.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: First Baptist Church in Greenville, Miss., is seeking a dynamic individual to oversee its music and worship ministries. Approx. Sunday School attendance 400, blended worship, TV and radio ministry. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1163, Greenville, MS 38702, www.fbcgreenville.net.

VALLEY GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, Pontotoc Association seeks part-time (bivocational) youth minister. Housing available, mail resume to 815 Kings Hwy, Pontotoc, MS 38863.

MUSIC DIRECTOR WITH SOME ASSOCIATE PASTOR RESPONSIBILITIES. Full or part-time possible. Church is 6 miles north of Blue Mountain College. Send resume to Springdale Baptist Church, 581 East Walnut Street, Ripley, MS 38663.

SEEKING YOUTH MINISTER. Position is bi-vocational working with 7th through 12 grades. Located about 36 miles south of Memphis, Tennessee and 7 miles east of Senatobia in northwest Mississippi. Please send your resume to Looxahoma Baptist Church, attention: search team, 808 Lyles Road, Senatobia, MS 38668.

MURPHY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH, LOUISVILLE, MISS., is seeking a part-time youth director. Please send resume and references to Murphy Creek Baptist Church, attn: youth director search committee, 5420 Bond Road, Louisville, MS 39339.

FIRST CHURCH, GLUCKSTADT, Miss., seeking a music minister for Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights only. Blended worship, free-flowing format. Contact Author Comans at (601) 209-6000 or email authorcomans@aol.com.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. WMU Day Group, Calvary Church, Greenwood



2. Baby Dedication, Cato Church, Rankin Association



3. GAs Attending Camp Garaywa, First Church, Kosciusko



4. Licensing of Minga and Harris, Bethel Church, Water Valley



5. Central Hills Camp, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale

1. The WMU Day Group from **Calvary Church, Greenwood**, assembled hygiene kits for missions projects. Shown, front row, are Martha Carpenter, Ruth Brewer, Emily Boyd, Gwen Jordan; back row, Nita Morrison, Dorothy Lehman, Dorris Miller, and Elizabeth Parkerson.

2. **Cato Church, Rankin Association**, recently held a baby dedication service. Shown are pastor Marty Wilson; Lee, Carley, and Carla Dawkins; Wesley and Robert Boyd; and Jennifer, Hollyn, and Zac Houston.

3. A group of GAs from **First Church, Kosciusko**, attended Camp Garaywa this summer. Shown are the participants.

4. **Bethel Church, Water Valley**, licensed Lurine Minga and Danny Harris to the ministry. Shown are Minga, Harris, and pastor James Edwards.

5. Twelve RA boys from **Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale**, attended camp at Central Hills July 25-29. Shown are the participants.

6. **Mt. Manna Church, Tate County**, had a groundbreaking ceremony for their new sanctuary June 12. Shown are Lurine Embrey, the church's longest standing member, and Jay Thomason, pastor.

7. **Big Creek Church, Big Creek**, licenses Matthew White to the ministry July 31. Shown are Jimmy Gaskin, Chris Conlee, White, and Jim Warner.

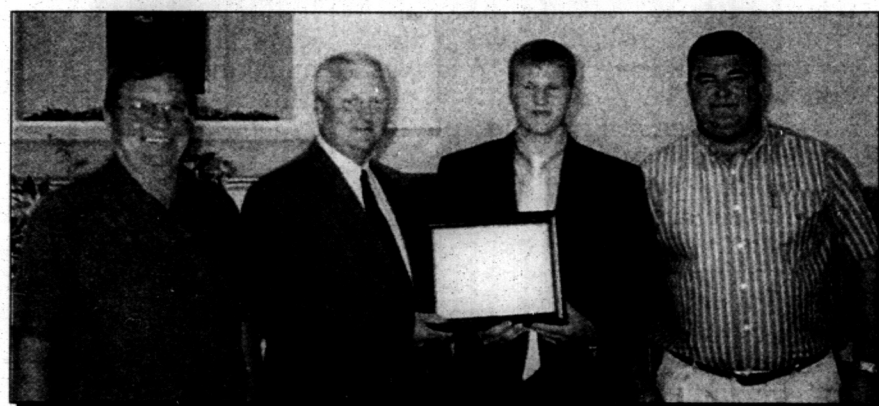
8. **Crenshaw Church, Crenshaw**, hosted 36 missionaries from Waldorf, Maryland, who conducted VBS and work projects. The group represented Potomac Association, Maryland, where Richard Logsdon is the DOM. Clint Harris is pastor.

9. **First Church, Terry**, ordained James Bailey, John Freels, and Andy Fullington as deacons. Shown are Freels, Bailey, pastor John Pace, and Fullington.

10. **East Moss Point Church, Moss Point**, celebrated 115 years of ministry July 31. Jimmie Milam brought the message, and Charles Rodgers spoke on behalf of the Jackson Association. Shown are pastor Allen Hays, Mandy Hays, Abby Grace Hays, Jimmie Milam, Grace Milam, Charles Rogers, and Debbie Rogers.



6. Groundbreaking, Mt. Manna Church, Tate County



7. White Licensed to Ministry, Big Creek Church, Big Creek



8. Missionaries, Crenshaw Church, Crenshaw



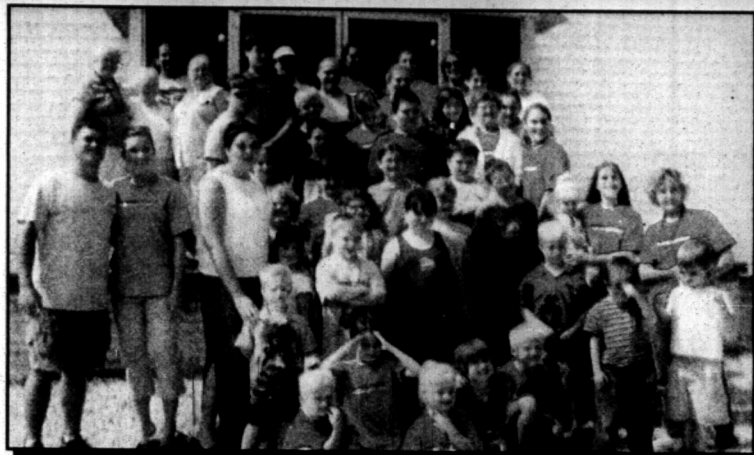
9. Deacon Ordination, First Church, Terry



10. Homecoming Celebration, East Moss Point Church, Moss Point

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

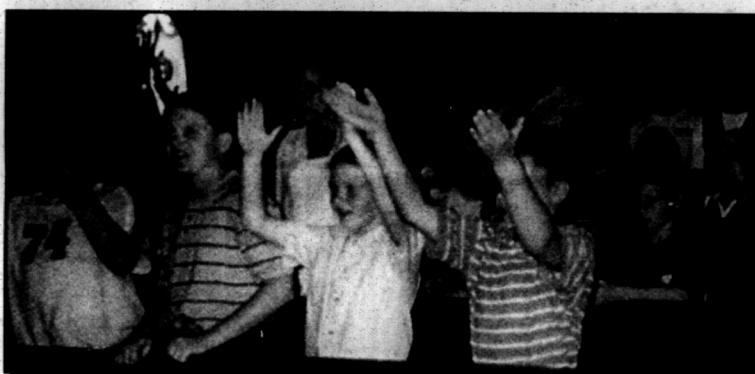
1. **Amaziah Church, Hickory Flat**, recognizes their VBS participants, shown. Leonard O. Howell, pastor; Jason Howell, assistant pastor.
2. **Fellowship Church, Ellisville**, held their VBS June 20-24, collecting \$409.23 for the Baptist Children's Village. Sharon Thompson, VBS director; Eudell Hill, pastor.
3. **Eastwood Church, Indianola**, held VBS June 6-0, with an average of 101 children and 22 teachers and helpers attending. The group raised \$304 for the Baptist Children's Village. Lois Mitchell, VBS director; Matthew Powell, music director; Billy Thomas pastor. Shown are some of the participants.
4. **Eastport Church, Iuka**, held its VBS with 20 children participating and one profession of faith. Shown are some of the participants during a scavenger hunt
5. **Slayden Church, Slayden**, held its VBS with 132 students enrolled with an average attendance of 99; 87 teachers/helpers enrolled with 21 decisions recorded; Toni Hunsucker and Lisa Jones co-directors; Benjamin Smothers, worship leader.
6. **Parkway Church, Houston**, held its VBS July 24-28 with 213 enrolled and an average attendance of 161. Total offering was \$213.85 for the Baptist Children's Village. Rebecca Mathis, VBS director; Randy Rinehart, pastor.
7. **Wellman Church, Bogue Chitto**, held its VBS with 90 enrolled and an average attendance of 73. Amy Larue, director; Ronnie McKee, assistant director; David Caves, pastor.



1. Amaziah Church, Hickory Flat



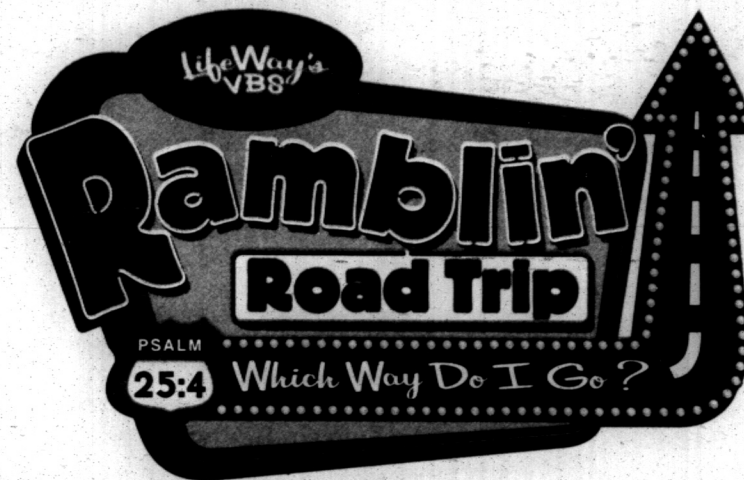
2. Fellowship Church, Ellisville



3. Eastwood Church, Indianola



4. Eastport Church, Iuka



5. Slayden Church, Slayden

JUST FOR THE RECORD

11. **Tate Church, Corinth**, sent 27 people on a mission trip to Mt. Vernon, Ill. The group conducted VBS, painted a church building, did construction work, and conducted two revivals. Also, Diane Phillips, Patty Webb, Peggy Woodhouse, and Bret McKee went to Romania this summer to do medical mission work and to lead a youth camp.
12. **Calvary Church, Vicksburg**, will show Love's Enduring Promise, from best-selling author Janette Oke, Aug. 23, 6:30 p.m. Admission is two cans of food for Keystone Ministries.
13. **Wellman Church, Bogue Chitto**, recently sent several youth on a mission trip to Eureka Springs, Ark., and Branson, Mo. The group held recreation and Bible stories at an area wilderness camp and enjoyed the Great Passion Play and Silver Dollar City. David Caves, pastor.
14. **First Church, Terry**, recently gave a generous offering of \$2,768.55 to the Baptist Children's Village, which included \$932.36 raised during Vacation Bible School by the children who donated 316 pounds of coins during "Coin Wars."

COLLEGE NEWS



1. BMC reaccreditation: Coward (left) and Martin

2. The **Commission on Colleges (COC)** of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recently announced that the accreditation of Blue Mountain College (BMC) has been reaffirmed as a result of actions taken by the COC on June 23. This announcement marked the culmination of more than three years of institutional study and preparation. Pictured are Bettye Coward (left), BMC President, and Bobby Martin, chairman of the school's trustee board.

3. Maria Teel was recently named the new director of Blue Mountain College's Office of Admissions.



3. Teel, BMC

1. **Mississippi College (MC)** hosts Super Choctaw Saturday on Aug. 20, 5 p.m., A. E. Wood Coliseum; hamburger and hot dog dinner with the opportunity to meet Choctaw sprints players and coaches; 7 p.m. scrimmage

game at Robinson-Hale Stadium. Door prizes. Dinner tickets are \$7 advance, \$10 at the door; children 6-13, \$5. Call (601) 925-3228 or (800) 232-3945 for information and reservations, or e-mail alumni@mc.edu.

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2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eter-
nal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and
rose from the grave to forgive
my sins and to restore my
relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a
loving relationship with Him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.*)

*"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to
become children of God, even to
those who believe in his name."
(John 1:12)*

*If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiri-
tual guidance.*

REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

**Arkadelphia Church,
Bailey: Homecoming, Aug.
21; Sunday School, 10:00
a.m.; Worship, 11:00 a.m.;
Potluck to follow. Gary
Smith, First Church, Carrier,
guest speaker.**

**Bunker Hill Church,
Columbia: Revival, Aug.
28-31; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6
p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.;
Gene Douglas, evangelist;
Larry Lott, music.**

**Concord Church, Bruce:
Revival, Aug. 21-24; Sun.,
11 a.m. and Sun.-Wed., 7
p.m.; Walk by Faith (Michael
Waldrop, Kevin Waldrop,
and Mark Richie) preaching
and singing; Bill Williamson,
pastor.**

**Faith Church, Overtt:
Revival, Aug. 21-24; Sun.,
Sunday School, 10 a.m.; wor-
ship, 11 a.m.; fellowship meal
12:30 p.m. followed by after-
noon service; Mon.-Wed., 7
p.m.; Macon Phillips, preach-
ing. Jerry Stroo, pastor.**

**Heritage Heights Church,
Laurel: Revival, Sept. 18-21;
Sun., worship, 10:45 a.m. and 6
p.m.; Mon.-Wed., lunch and
devotion at noon and worship,
7 p.m.; Jim Futral, preaching;
Bill Chancellor, music.**

**Highland Church, Crystal
Springs: Revival, Aug. 21-24;
Sun., 6:00 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:00
p.m.; Jerry Reed, Lighthouse
Church, Pascagoula, evangelist;
Ronnie Whittington, music.**

**Lee County Association:
Senior Adult Revival, Aug.
29-31, at Harrisburg Church,**

Tupelo; Mon.-Wed., 10 a.m.-12
noon; speakers include Mickey
Dalrymple, James Lewis, and
Jim Futral; music each day by
Aron Tones, with special
music each day and a fellow-
ship meal at the close of service
Wednesday.

**Moak's Creek Church,
Lincoln Association: Home-
coming, Sept. 4; worship, 11
a.m., followed by lunch and
afternoon services.**

**New Providence Church,
Carthage: Homecoming, Sept.
18; registration, 9 a.m.; worship,
10 a.m. followed by fellowship
lunch; Smith Sanders, pastor.**

**Oak Grove Church, Clark
County: Homecoming, Aug.
21; worship, 11 a.m., followed
by lunch; Bobby Walker,
Clara, guest speaker; Terry
Irby, pastor.**

**Oak Grove Church, Lake:
Revival, Aug. 21-24; Sunday
School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11
a.m., followed by covered dish
lunch and afternoon service,
1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.;
Kevin Cooper, preaching;
Danny Harrison, music; Keith
McGee, pastor.**

**Shiloh Church, Sontag:
Homecoming, Aug. 28;
Sunday School, 10 a.m.; wor-
ship, 11 a.m., followed by cov-
ered dish lunch and afternoon
singing; Eddie Bates, preach-
ing; Larry Romack, pastor.**

**Trinity Church, Carthage:
Revival, Aug. 28-31; Sun., 11
a.m. and Sun. - Wed., 7 p.m.;
Ricky Gray, preaching; Mark
Jones, music.**

STAFF CHANGES

Slayden Church, Slayden, has called
Mark Mathis as Education/Music minis-
ter. Mathis comes from the Alcorn County
school system. Shown are Mathis, Misty
Mathis, and Connor Mathis.



Mathis Family

Chester Church, Ackerman, has
called Steve Jordan as pastor effective
July 17. Jordan comes from First Church,
Marion, and is a graduate of MC and
New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife
Mary have two sons, Trey and Philip.

First Church, Greenville, has called
Tricia Fenn as minister to preschool
and children. Fenn comes from North
Fort Worth Church, Fort Worth, Tex.,
and is a graduate of Southwestern
Seminary and Auburn University.

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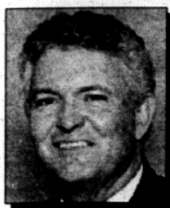


Practical Principles for Christian Living



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 6

Does it really matter... contacting your legislators



Porter

By Jimmy Porter

A Baptist layman tired of the bingo establishment operating the same hours his church was having services, especially since they were so close to one another. The Christian Action Commission (CAC) suggested he contact his state representative about the situation. He did. His representative filed a bill stipulating the hours bingo could operate if within a certain distance to a church. The bill passed both houses and the governor signed it into law. One man made a difference.

President Abraham Lincoln, in his Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863, said, "...and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." President Lincoln stated a relevant truth at a time when our nation stood at the

crossroads of survival or extinction. Government is a people business. Our form of government, democracy, is destined to succeed or fail in direct proportion to the number of people willing to participate.

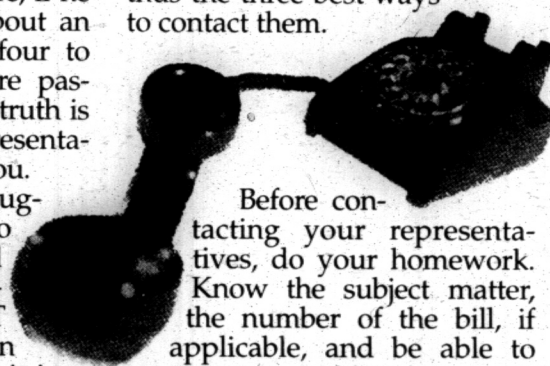
Throughout the course of a year you are often asked to contact your senator or representative to express your opinion on certain legislative issues. Does it make a difference whether you respond or not?

My representative, Philip Gunn, recently said, "We perceive one phone call represents 10 to 20 people." Therefore, if he gets forty phone calls about an issue, that could mean four to eight hundred people are passionately concerned. The truth is your senators and representatives want to hear from you.

Following are a few suggestions as to how to effectively address a bill or issue with your legislators. First, you MUST find out the district in which you live and who it is

that represents you. Your county clerk will provide you with this information if you kindly ask. You must also secure the mailing address and phone numbers in Washington, Jackson, and/or area offices if applicable.

The next step is to determine the best way to contact them. You need to know that some do not utilize e-mail. Therefore, sending e-mail or forwarding form letters via e-mail is a waste of time if your representative is one of those — but they ALL talk on the phone, read letters, and visit with their constituents — thus the three best ways to contact them.



Before contacting your representatives, do your homework. Know the subject matter, the number of the bill, if applicable, and be able to state your position in two to

three minutes. A good rule of thumb is "one contact — one issue," no matter how the contact is made. Keep it simple and keep it short. A face to face meeting is always the best contact but is not always feasible. A phone call or letter is also very effective. Most legislators will return your call if you will leave name and number, especially when you are a voter in their district.

Also, if you take the time to compose a letter, they appreciate it. On more than one occasion I have written Senator Lott or Senator Cochran, and each time I have received a response. I have never gotten a response from a signed petition or a form letter I forwarded through e-mail. These methods can be effective, but when you take the time to call, visit, or write a brief note, it seems to be more effective.

Our elected officials, for the most part, want to do a good job and represent your interests, but you must let them know what your interests are. You don't have to be an expert; just believe

in your point of view and state it. Also, it is important to be kind, courteous, and remember to say, "Thank you" for their time.

At the CAC we have found that some issues are very difficult and complex for the men and women at the Capitol to resolve. Therefore, it is our Christian duty to pray for them daily that they have insight and wisdom to make the right decisions. When you contact them on these tough issues and share your feelings, it makes their task easier.

The CAC often speaks on your behalf during the legislative session and throughout the year, but we need your help. When you and your neighbors contact your elected officials, it speaks volumes to them. Every single contact is vital. When you are asked to make a contact and you in good conscience can do so — DO IT. You can make a difference.

Porter is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at jporter@christianaction.com.

European leaders downplay SBC meeting

JACKSONVILLE, FL. (ABP) — Baptist leaders in Europe predict the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) will have a hard time drawing Baptists from the continent into a new international network that, some say, will compete with the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

When the SBC withdrew from the BWA in June, charging the group with a "liberal drift," convention leaders announced plans to start and fund a new international "fellowship" of like-minded conservatives.

In early July, nine Southern Baptist leaders met with 12 European Baptists in Warsaw, Poland, for what SBC executive Morris Chapman predicted "may prove in time to have been the inaugural meeting of a network that shall extend to every corner of the earth, creating a close fellowship among like-minded conservative Christians."

The 12 Europeans, who were not named in an SBC news release, came from six countries, most in eastern Europe and among the most conservative in the region — Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Poland and Romania.

While many European Baptists are as conservative — or more so — than Southern Baptists, they are "very unlikely" to join the SBC's new network, said Bulgarian pastor Theo Angelov, outgoing general secretary of the European Baptist Federation (EBF).

"There are many conservative Baptist leaders in East Europe, and I am happy that none of them were there," Angelov said of the July 1-2 meeting — held less than a month before 13,000 Baptists from 100-plus countries met in England to celebrate the 100th anniversary of BWA.

Angelov said only two of the Europeans who participated in the July 1-2 meeting are official representatives of Baptist unions — Paul Negrut, president of the Baptist Union of R.S. Romania, and Vasil Vangelov, president of the Baptist Union of Bulgaria.

Negrut, president of a Romanian seminary in Oradea that receives funding from conservative Southern Baptists, was the only European union president to support the SBC's withdrawal from BWA. He also was responsible for enlisting Europeans to participate in the Poland meeting.

Vangelov, the Bulgarian president, "does not speak English and he did not realize what the meeting would be about," Angelov, Vangelov's predecessor, told Associated Baptist Press in an e-mail interview. "He was very naïve and thought that there would be discussions about the strategy of [the SBC International Mission Board]. And he wanted to know more about it, because there are IMB missionaries in Bulgaria. I talked to him after he has returned, and nobody from Bulgaria is supportive of the policy of [the] SBC."

Angelov predicted the SBC's efforts likely won't cause a split in the Baptist World Alliance, but it will sow division within world Baptist ranks, he said. "I am only afraid that if the SBC leaders decide to use money that American churches are giving for mission work as a tool in this battle, then some Baptist unions will be tempted to cooperate. This behavior is not a Baptist approach. It is simply an ideology."

Tony Peck, Angelov's successor as general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, which encompasses 51 unions including Romania, also said the SBC-backed network could prove divisive.

"... [W]e would see any attempt to divide the Baptist witness in Europe and the Middle East as undermining missionary effectiveness at a time when we need to unite our Baptist efforts to bear witness to the gospel on our continent," Peck said. "I received some assurances from the SBC that this meeting was not intended to start an alternative network to the BWA and therefore I was surprised to read the reported comments of Morris Chapman that 'the possibility of building a fellowship network of conservative Baptists around the world created a genuine and heartfelt excitement.'"

Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said the proposed conservative network poses no threat to BWA. Chapman declined to identify the participants in the Poland meeting. "We felt each representative should have the choice to release his own news article, having the choice of whether to include or exclude their names," he explained. "Since this was an exploratory meeting, our announcing names really served no purpose unless we deliberately wished to create tensions between them and BWA, which was and is not our objective."

Southern Baptist representatives at the meeting were Chapman; O.S. Hawkins, president of Guidestone Financial Resources, the SBC's retirement and benefits agency; retired Houston judge Paul Pressler; Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board; and five seminary leaders — Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Seminary; Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Seminary; Philip Roberts, president of Midwestern Seminary; Craig Blaising, provost of Southwestern; and Bill Wagner, professor at Golden Gate Seminary.

Bibliocipher

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T GAJAAQZ KXM
SZANACXNA, GNASZTAB,
GK SZA LANQTAJ XC YXE,
SZDS KA ONAJABS KXMN
GXETAJ D VTITBY
JDQNTCTQA, ZXVK,
DQQAOSDGVA MBSX
YXE, FZTQZ TJ KXMN
NADJXBDGVA JANITQA.
NXLDBJ SFAVIA: XBA

Clue: G = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Eight: Twelve.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

August 1-15

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Albert E. Keahy
Mrs. Frances P. Keahy



Volunteers from Ridgecrest Church in Madison recently brought new sheets, comforters, and pillows for up to 20 children. The ladies made up all the beds and hung curtains. After all their hard work, the group enjoyed a snack with several of the BCV staff members and residents.

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Back to School Needs:

Jr. High Yearbook (\$30)

Sr. High Yearbook (\$50)

School Pictures (\$20)

1/2 in. up to 1 1/2 in binders w/ pockets

Dividers w/ pockets

Elmer's Glue Pens

Large Scissors

Hand Sanitizer

150 White Poster Boards

Clorox Wipes

409 Spray

X-Large Backpacks for teenagers

5 Texas Instruments TI 83 Calculators

Our school supply needs are dwindling thanks to your generosity! We truly appreciate all that you are doing to make sure The BCV residents are equipped for academic success. You are helping us steer children down The S.A.F.E. Track toward Spiritual Growth, Academic Achievement, Family Values and Emotional Strength.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

It's in the Books

Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:5-15;
Revelation 20:11-15

Every February, I spend a lot of time accounting for what seems like every bit of financial activity in our family in the last year. I don't do this accounting because I like to; I do it, as you do, because the federal and state governments require it. Those citizens who fail to do their accounting and settle with the state of Mississippi and the I.R.S. will most certainly be called at some point to a most unpleasant accounting. This week, we're studying a much more serious accounting that we each will make to God at the end of time.

Prepare to Give An Account (Rom. 14:10-12) — Two of our passages for this week mention the final judgment in the context of some other subject. In the verses preceding this focus pas-

sage, Paul admonished Christians not to look down on one another or criticize one another on the basis of "doubtful issues" (Rom. 14:1), such as dietary restrictions or observance of special days. He explained that it would be improper for any Christian to condemn another, as we each and all will be judged by God, the Great Judge who makes no mistakes. Verse 11 quotes Isaiah 45:23, reminding us that each person God created will someday bow the knee and acknowledge God with praise. Each of us will have to render an account of ourselves to God. The word refers to the opening of a bookkeeper's ledger.

Is this a hopeless or fearful verity? For those of us who have



Royce

accepted Christ, it is hopeful, although it is, of course, still awesome. Verse 4 is helpful: "Who are you to criticize another's servant? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And stand he will! For the Lord is able to make him stand." We tend to think about our failures and

sins when we think of this grand accounting, but, no doubt, we will be pleasantly surprised to remember some good works we have forgotten but God has not. More important, the strength to stand comes from the Lord, not from ourselves. The great promises Jesus has made to us will not fail us at the end, though our works will be assessed.

Build to Last (1 Cor. 3:10-15) — In the context of discussing factions in the Corinthian church, Paul described the work of Christian servants building on the foundation of Jesus Christ in His church. In Corinth, Paul, as a "skilled master builder" (architect), had

laid a foundation. Another servant of Christ could build on that foundation. Both worked according to the role and grace given to them. All who build upon the foundation must be careful how they work. Some work with precious metals and "costly stones"; others use less costly and less durable materials. Perhaps Paul here was still thinking of workers who had encouraged the formation of factions as building with unreliable materials.

On Judgment Day, the works of all Christian workers will be tested by the refining fire; precious metals and gems will survive the fire. Works of straw and wood will not. The one whose works survive will receive a reward; the one whose works do not will suffer that loss, but he "will be saved." Every Christian's salvation is secure.

Avoid the Second Death (Rev. 20:11-15) — A more dramatic scene than this one can hardly be imagined. God Himself sits on the "great white

throne." White represents God's purity and pure judgment. Everyone who has died, without regard for earthly "rank" of any kind, stands before the throne. God's presence is so overwhelming that even "earth" and "heaven" flee from before Him, perhaps in preparation for the new heaven and new earth portrayed in the next chapter of Revelation.

Two kinds of books are opened. One records the earthly acts of each individual, and the dead are judged according to their works. This is a kind of review of each life. The other kind of book, the "book of life," records the names of those redeemed through Christ. This is the record that determines individual, eternal destiny. Those whose identities are not recorded are consigned to the "lake of fire," the second death. Everything and everyone that has rejected God's dominion will suffer the same tragedy.

Rhoda Royce is a member of First Church, Clinton.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Rejoice in the Lord's Sovereignty

Daniel 7:2-3,8-14

The book of Daniel begins with events early in Daniel's life, includes events later in his life, and continues with events beyond his life, his prophecies of future events. Daniel's faith had taught him to face the present with confidence and the future with even greater confidence.

Like Ezekiel and other men of God, Daniel was given prophetic visions of future events. These visions, even though they sometimes describe terrible events, are meant to encourage believers and give us reason to rejoice in the Lord's sovereignty. One primary theme of all the Old and New Testament prophecies is that God is ultimately triumphant over evil. That ought to put some joy in your journey!

1. Tumultuous Times (Daniel 7:2-3)

Verses 2 and 3 describe a great churning of the sea (humanity stirred by strife and chaos) and four beasts who rise up out of that sea. At the time of this vision, Daniel had already witnessed the rise of the first beast (a lion with wings of an eagle), the Babylonian Empire (see also Jeremiah 49:19-22, Ezekiel 17:3). Just as surely as that empire rose, the other three would rise. History informs us that after the Babylonian Empire, there were the Medo-Persian Empire (represented by a bear), the Greek Empire (represented by a four headed, four winged leopard), and the Roman Empire (the beast with iron teeth). (An excellent commentary, in this writer's opinion particularly for this topic, is "Daniel," vol. 18 in



Schuman

"The New American Commentary" by Stephen R. Miller, Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994.)

We live in tumultuous times today. We are warned of these perilous times in passages such as 2 Timothy 3. Some organizations and "churches" bearing "Christ" or "Christian" in their names have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. How do they deny the power? They deny the power by denying the inerrancy of God's Word, by denying that God has foretold anything, by denying the miraculous power of God, and by denying that what God calls sin is sin.

The ungodly of this world, the spirit of antichrist, will produce more and more tumult against those who are true believers. Because we know our tumultuous times will grow worse until Jesus comes and makes all things right, we must be resolved all the more to remain faithful to the truth of God's Word. In a tumultuous world that denies

absolutes, especially truth, we must all the more proclaim the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

2. Tremendous God (7:8-10)

But as tumultuous as the times may be, we serve a tremendous God. He is the "Ancient of Days." He has always been, and He will always be (Psalm 90:2). That alone is tremendous! But there is infinitely more to Him than His timelessness. Take a few extra moments to capture the full magnitude of verses 8 through 10.

Our God is a Holy and Righteous Judge. His judgments are pure and holy. He judges by His absolutely perfect standards, unlike some judges today who disregard the laws of the land and rule based on what feels right to them. Because He is holy, He is worshipped by a countless number before Him (Revelation 7:9-10; 15:4).

The fire from his throne (v. 9) speaks of His judgment. There is coming a day of judgment for the wicked. Those who deny a literal hell will come to a horrible realization that it is real. Dear reader, believe that what God says literally is literally true!

Not only is our tremendous God eternal, holy, and righteous, He is also all powerful. Though evil forces may oppose God, they are not His opposite. They are limited in power and abilities. God's power is unlimited, omnipotent (Revelation 19:6). God will ultimately destroy Satan, the antichrist, and all of the forces of evil (Revelation 19:20; 20:10). There is none like God.

3. Timeless Reign (7:11-14)

The fourth world order will be replaced by a final world order, the kingdom of God. Just as our God is eternal, we can be sure His kingdom will be everlasting.

Let us be faithful in our work for the Lord, in our giving, in our support of other true believers, and in our stand for Him, even when it is unpopular or even dangerous. Our Almighty God has carved out a glorious future, so we don't need to be whittling away the present.

Schuman is pastor of Hamilton Church, Ashland.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

Northeast BSU fills spring break with missions

BOONEVILLE, Ms. (Special) — The Baptist Student Union (BSU) at Northeast Mississippi Community College (NECC) in Booneville provided three spring break 2005 mission trips for students on March 12-18.

One of those trips was to St. Louis to work with Ed Moncada, who directs the ministry to international students for Missouri Baptists. Eleven students accompanied Wayne Vandiver, Northeast BSU director, to St. Louis. Those students were Dallas Vandiver, Justin Pitner, Emily Johnson, Lauren Ford, and Nikki Crow, all of Booneville; Josh Mallard of Dyer, Tn.; Bobby Hudspeth of Tupelo; Kevin Goss of Iuka; Renea Hellen of Baldwin; Brandon Blount of Bruce; and Darrel Sneed of Lawrenceburg, Tn. The primary tasks of the group was to prayer walk and do personal evangelism on two college campuses, do surveys in business districts where most of the businesses were owned by immigrants, and to prayer walk through some Bosnian neighborhoods. The two college campuses on which the students worked were Washington University and St. Louis University. Neither of these schools has a BSU or, for that matter, hardly any other evangelical campus ministry. Both of these universities are bigger than any university in Mississippi.

The BSU students used survey forms to start talking to people in order to witness to them. The last two questions on the survey were the diagnostic questions from Evangelism Explosion. The second diagnostic question is, "Suppose you were to die right now; and you found yourself standing before God, and He asked you, 'Why should I let you into My heaven?' What would you say?" Sad to say, very few gave an answer that showed that they were trusting only in Jesus Christ to get them to heaven. Most gave "works answers" that had nothing to do with the blood of Christ. By the end of the week, the BSU students saw five people pray to receive Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. One Washington University student was saved, while four were saved at St. Louis University.

While the BSU students were in St. Louis, they were allowed to tour a Hindu temple. The elderly man who lead the tour told them about each god and its significance to the Hindu people. There were two sights in the temple that related to the gods. One was a dry erase board that listed different rituals that could be performed along with the prices for each. The highest price on the board was \$750 per person. The second was an Indian man sitting at a desk counting a big pile of checks. The tour guide said that over 5,000 families were involved at this temple. It is also sad to note that this temple was just down the street from the Muslim mosque.

Panama City Beach, Fl. is the spring break capital of the world for college students everywhere, or so it seems. Go to Florida any week in March and the streets will be crowded with college students who are spending their time drinking and going

to clubs. For the BSU students from the NECC, they saw it as a mission opportunity where they could let God use them to share His love and serve others. Seventeen students accompanied the BSU intern, Leigh Ann Leslie of Tupelo, this year to BeachReach 2005. They were: Ashley Rickett and

students would be serving and greeting the spring breakers, while others would sit at a table and start witnessing and talking about Jesus.

The week was full of all kinds of ministry opportunities and God used every one of them. Lives were changed that week, and seeds were planted. Thirty-four college students came to know the Lord in this one week all because Christians had the desire and were willing to serve. Awesome stuff happens when God is the one doing it!

The mission trip to New York was jokingly nicknamed, "The Clampets Go To Town." That's the kind of humor conjured up by the thought of 13 students and one director from the BSU of NECC traveling to New York City for a spring break mission trip.

A division of the North American Mission Board called New Hope New York is partnering with churches and BSU groups to reach New Yorkers with the Gospel. Door-to-door canvassing for local churches, prayer walking, servant evangelism, and simply talking with people are common tools that are being used there. Since New York is such a diverse city, the methods and opportunities are vast.

One of the most unique situations the Northeast BSU group faced was an unreached people group living in...Brooklyn. You read correctly. The nomadic Fulani people group are from West Africa. There is now a substantial number of Fulani coming to New York with work visas. Brooklyn is a popular settling destination.

The team divided into smaller groups and went in African businesses to hand out literature advertising English classes being held in a local community center. Adhering to Islamic tradition, women spoke to women and men spoke to men. Several of the Fulani people asked, "Why are you doing this?" Our reply was, "We're Christians and want to help you because we love you. That's what Christians do."

For someone unfamiliar with the Muslim mindset, this point could sound weak, but not to the Fulani. They are a very gracious and moral people, convinced that the words "American" and "Christian" are synonymous with MTV and Hollywood movies. These budding relationships

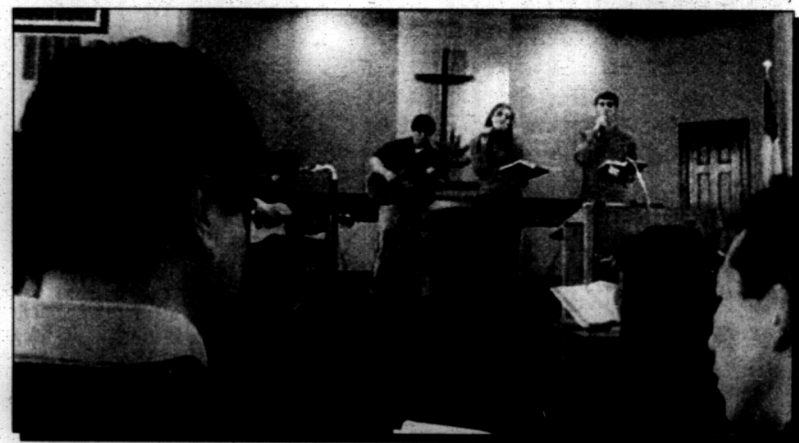


Emily Steen of Corinth; Mark Rhodes and Ben Turner of Kossuth; Katie Jackson and Anne Marie Chandler of New Albany; Brad Wray of West Point; Summer Edwards of Columbus; Sandy Byrd and Gary Stanton of Potts Camp; Brooks Dampier of Saltillo; Heather Presley of Pine Grove; Loren Nabors of Ripley; Nicole Flaherty of Sherman; Josh Harris of Booneville; and Cody Hickman and Marcy Irwin of Tupelo.

The group had a variety of things to do throughout the week. Saturday night after the opening assembly, there was a prayer walk. Northeast took a particular part of the Strip over which to pray. The students got to see things they may have never been around before.

Sunday started up the week with the group involved in van ride ministry. Spring break students were given a telephone number to request a van to come pick them up. Once the Spring Breakers were inside the van, three Beach-Reachers who sat in the back of the van would start up spiritual conversations and just share the love of Christ.

There was a free pancake breakfast Monday through Thursday for the spring breakers. Some



are paving the way for an understanding of who Jesus is and what Christianity is all about.

Stephanie Sandlin, NECC student and member of Colonial Hills Church in Southaven, summed it up like this. "That area will be continued to display Christ's glory and we played a part in that."

The Northeast BSU wishes to thank all the churches that support it with prayer and financial contributions. God has used these mission trips to accomplish many things. Students from Mississippi have grown in their walk with Christ and in their appreciation of His blessings — and the list goes on!

Compiled and edited from articles written by Wayne Vandiver, Leigh Anne Leslie, and Ed Earnest. Unabridged versions of the articles and more photos from the mission trips can be viewed at <http://www.northeast-bsu.edearnest.com/springbreak.htm>.

